

C378

UK3

1865B

UNIVERSITY OF N.C. AT CHAPEL HILL



00039136988

**This book must not
be taken from the
Library building.**

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Two Literary Societies

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA,

June 1st, 1865,

BY

HON. WM. H. BATTLE, LL. D.,

OF CHAPEL HILL.

R A L E I G H :

W M . B . S M I T H & C O .

1 8 6 6 .

1900 11 14 1800

UNIVERSITY OF N. C.,
DIALECTIC HALL, Oct. 30th, 1865. }

SIR:

We, the undersigned, in behalf of the Dialectic Society, would tender you our sincere thanks for the very excellent Address delivered before the two Literary Societies at our last annual commencement, and request a copy of the same for publication.

We would, individually, enter our solicitations that you comply with the above, since circumstances deterred many from hearing its delivery.

Very respectfully,

R. W. MEANS,
P. B. MEANS,
E. L. MOREHEAD, } Committee.

Hon. W. H. BATTLE.

CHAPEL HILL, Oct. 30th, 1865.

MY DEAR SIRS:

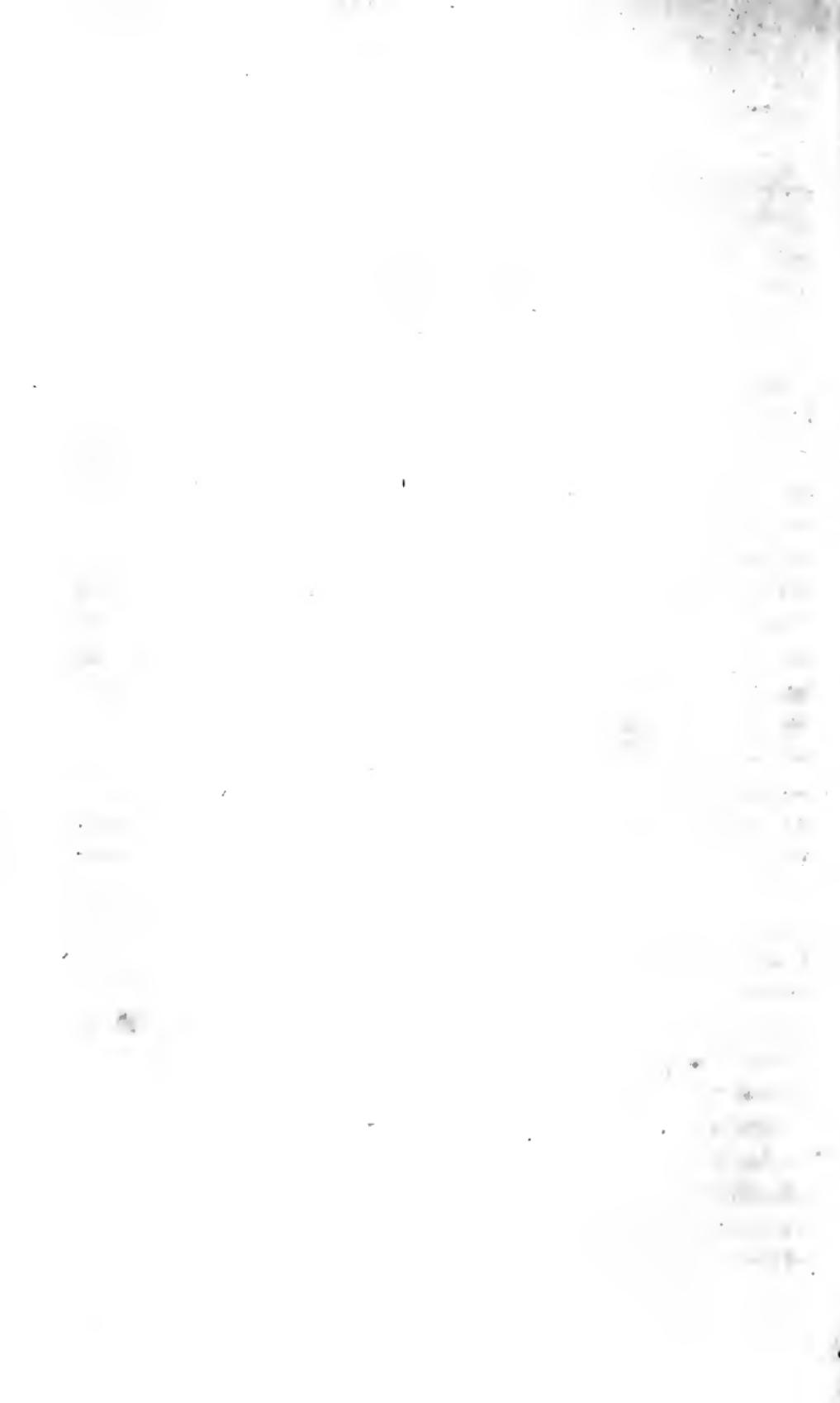
I thank you for the kind terms in which you notice the Address which I delivered before the two Societies at the last annual commencement of the University.

The same motive which prompted me to yield to the wishes of the Society, under whose appointment the Address was made, now impels me to send a copy to be disposed of as the Society may think proper.

Very truly yours,

WILL: H. BATTLE.

To Messrs. R. W. MEANS,
P. B. MEANS,
E. L. MOREHEAD, } Committee.



A D D R E S S .

YOUNG GENTLEMEN OF THE
DIALECTIC AND PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETIES:

I appear before you upon an occasion of extraordinary interest. A war, the parallel to which does not appear upon the records of history, has just closed. Its results have been disastrous to our section of the country. Among the victims of its fury, there have been none more conspicuous than the higher institutions of learning. One by one, the universities and colleges of the South have been prostrated by the violence of the storm. All, save our beloved *Alma Mater*, have been compelled to suspend their exercises and to close their doors. Here alone the college bell has not ceased to call students to the Chapel for prayers, and to the Professors' rooms for recitation. It must be confessed, however, that our light has been almost extinguished, and that only a spark of life still exists to send out a feeble ray. To this distinction of continued existence, our University is indebted, under God, to the indomitable energy of her Board of Trustees, and to the devoted attachment of her President and Faculty. All honor to them for their noble perseverance in the cause of science and literature. *Inter arma silent leges*, but it seems that the love of learning is stronger than the laws, for it has still flourished amidst the din of arms.

At such an era in the progress of our University, I have thought, my young friends, that I could not better occupy your attention for a few moments than by giving you a brief sketch of its origin and history, adding a few remarks upon the influence which it has had upon the country.

It is the boast of our State that in its organic law, provision

is made for the instruction of her youth in all useful learning. By the 41st section of the Constitution it is declared: "That a school or schools shall be established by the legislature for the convenient instruction of youth, with such salaries to the masters, paid by the public, as may enable them to instruct at low prices; and all useful learning shall be duly encouraged and promoted in one or more universities." The merit of those who adopted this wise provision cannot be duly appreciated, without adverting for a moment to the time at, and the circumstances under, which it was made. The war of the Revolution had but fairly commenced, and the Declaration of Independence had only a few months before been promulgated, when a convention of the people met at the town of Halifax for the purpose of preparing a constitution or form of government for the State. The country was poor, the people generally but slightly educated, and the war then raging was of doubtful issue, yet the members of the convention were resolved that their posterity should enjoy those advantages of education which had been denied to the most of them. There can be no doubt that a large majority of those members had been instructed only in the plain rules of reading, writing and arithmetic, but destitute as they were of book learning, they had, in the business of social and political life, improved their mental faculties, and had thereby educated themselves to a due appreciation of the rights and privileges to which, as free-men, they were entitled. A few, and but a few of them, were men who had been more favored by fortune, and were well instructed in all the branches of a classical and scientific education. Prominent among these were Richard Caswell, Thomas Burke, John Ashe, Samuel Ashe, Abner Nash, David Caldwell, Joseph Hewes, Thomas Jones, Allen Jones, Willie Jones, Cornelius Harnett, Archibald McLane and Waightstill Avery. Richard Caswell was president of the convention, and Thomas Burke was chairman of the committee on the constitution. They were both eminent lawyers,

and it is to them and their enlightened conpeers that we are indebted for that section in the constitution from which have emanated our University, our Colleges and our noble system of Common Schools. The constitution was ratified the 18th day of December, 1776, and the war ceased by a definitive treaty of peace which secured our independence in September, 1783 ; but it was not until the year 1789 that the financial condition of the State justified the legislature in making the necessary expenditures for the foundation of a University. In that year the charter of this institution was granted, and among the patriotic and enlightened members who advocated it, no one stood more conspicuous than Gen'l William R. Davie. Of his efforts on that occasion, the late Judge Murphy, who delivered the first annual address before your Societies, thus spoke in that address : "The General Assembly resolved to found our University. I was present in the House of Commons, when Davie addressed that body upon the bill granting a loan of money to the Trustees for erecting the buildings of this University, and although more than thirty years have since elapsed, I have the most vivid recollections of the greatness of his manner and the powers of his eloquence upon that occasion." After the grant of the charter, the first object which engaged the attention of the Trustees, was to fix upon a site for the institution. The first Board consisted of forty members who resided in various parts of the State, and were all men distinguished for position and influence. The committee appointed by them for the purpose, after a careful examination of many places which had been suggested to them as suitable, selected Chapel Hill. This place was so called from its being the site of one of the ante-revolutionary churches of the English Establishment. The church building is said to have stood on the lot now occupied by Capt. Richard S. Ashe. It may not be uninteresting to revert to the terms in which the location was spoken of in one of the public journals of that day :

"The seat of the University is on the summit of a very high ridge. There is a gentle declivity of 300 yards to the village, which is situated in a handsome plain considerably lower than the site of the public buildings, but so greatly elevated above the neighboring country as to furnish an extensive landscape. The ridge appears to commence about half a mile directly east of the college buildings, where it rises abruptly several hundred feet. This peak is called Point Prospect. The peak country spreads off below, like the ocean, giving an immense hemisphere, in which the eye seems to be lost in the extent of space."

The building committee, having in the year 1793 secured a competent contractor in the person of Mr. James Patterson, of Chatham county, the 12th day of October in that year, was fixed upon for laying the corner stone of the first building. The following account of the ceremony subsequently appeared in the journal to which we have already referred: "A large number of the brethren of the Masonic order from Hillsborough, Chatham, Granville and Warren attended to assist at the ceremony of placing the corner stone; and the procession for this purpose moved from Mr. Patterson's at 12 o'clock in the following order: The Masonic brethren in their usual order of procession, the Commissioners, the Trustees not Commissioners, the Hon. Judge McKay and other public officers, then followed the gentlemen of the vicinity. On approaching the south end of the building the Masons opened to the right and left, and the Commissioners, &c., passed through and took their place. The Masonic procession then moved on, round the foundation of the building, and halted with their usual ceremonies opposite the south-east corner, where William Richardson Davie, Grand Master of the Fraternity, &c., in this State, assisted by two Masters of Lodges and four other officers, laid the corner stone, enclosing a plate to commemorate the transaction."

The Rev. Dr. McCorkle, a member of the Board of Trus-

tees, then made an appropriate and eloquent address to his fellow members and the spectators, which closed as follows: "The seat of the University was next sought for, and the public eye selected Chapel Hill, a lovely situation, in the centre of the State, at a convenient distance from the capital, in a healthy and fertile neighborhood. May this hill be for religion as the ancient hill of Zion; and for literature and the muses may it surpass the ancient Parnassus! We this day enjoy the pleasure of seeing the corner stone of the University, its foundations, its material, and the architects of the buildings, and we hope ere long to see its stately walls and spire ascending to their summit. Ere long we hope to see it adorned with an elegant village, accommodated with all the necessities and conveniences of civilized society." This address was followed by a short prayer, which closed with the united *Amen* of an immense concourse of people.

The building, since called the East, having been sufficiently prepared, Mr. Hinton James, of Wilmington, the first student, arrived on the Hill the 12th day of February, 1795, and the exercises of the institution were soon after commenced. The first instructor was the Rev. David Kerr, a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, who was Professor of Ancient Languages, and he was assisted by Samuel Allen Holmes in the preparatory department. Shortly afterwards Charles W. Harris, a native of Iredell county in this State, and a graduate of Princeton College in New Jersey, was appointed Professor of Mathematics, but he held the office only one year, when he was succeeded by the Rev. Joseph Caldwell, who was also a graduate of Princeton, and a native of New Jersey. The first commencement, at which the degree of Bachelor of Arts was conferred, was held in the year 1798, when seven young gentlemen, among whom was Mr. Hinton James, received that degree.

For several years after the erection of the first building, the accommodations for the students, both in the collegiate and the

preparatory department, remained nearly the same. The old Chapel and the East were the only edifices, and the latter was then only two stories high, and contained but sixteen rooms. The old chapel was the *Aula Personica* in which the degrees were for many years conferred.

The South building was commenced, carried up a story and a half, and then left for a long time in an unfinished state. We are told by Dr. Hooper in his admirable address before Alumni of this institution, entitled "Fifty Years Since," that the students who could not well prepare their lessons in the crowded dormitories of the East, were in the habit of erecting cabins in the corners of the unfinished brick walls of the South, where they could pursue their studies to better advantage. But Dr. Caldwell, who was then President, could not long endure this state of things; and by his active exertions, the sum of twelve thousand dollars was raised by subscription, which enabled the Trustees to have the South building completed. This was done in 1812; and about the year 1824, the West building was erected and an additional story was put upon the East. Shortly afterwards the new chapel was built; and in 1848 extensions were added to the East and West buildings, which was done mainly for the accommodation of the two Literary Societies, whose rooms in the third story of the South had become too small for the increased number of members. The buildings since erected have been the University library, and the wings to the East and West. The two last were finished and prepared for occupation only a short time before the commencement of the war. The beautiful and commodious Society Halls contained in them have been the admiration of all beholders.

At the commencement of the institution, and for several years afterwards, the range of studies was very contracted. Greek was not introduced into the course until 1804, and in the year 1807, we learn that Morse's Geography was one of the principal studies of the Sophomore class. The higher

mathematics were not introduced until the Rev. Elisha Mitchell came here as professor of that science in 1819. The same year witnessed the advent of Denison Olmsted as the first Professor of Chemistry; and in the year following, the Rev. Shepherd K. Kollock, was in like manner the first Professor of Rhetoric and Logie. After that time the number and variety of studies were greatly increased, and it is believed that the present college curriculum is on as high a scale as any in the United States.

The University has, in the main, been fortunate in its governors and instructors. During the first nine years of its existence, it had no president, but was under the management of a professor as presiding officer; that officer, however, was, for the greater part of the time, the same distinguished gentleman who afterwards became its first president. Of his eminent merits in that respect it is unnecessary for me to speak at this time and in this place. The beautiful monument erected to his memory by the Alumni of this institution, and which now graces and adorns the college campus, fully attests his claim to distinction, not only as the head of the University, but as a learned divine, and an early and efficient advocate of a system of internal improvements and of common schools in the State. His presidency extended from his first appointment in 1804, until his death in 1835, with the exception of an interval of four years, from 1812 to 1816, during which the unsuccessful administration of Dr. Robert H. Chapman occurred. Of the present incumbent, I shall say nothing, except that he has filled the office with distinguished success for nearly thirty years. In administering the affairs of college, and in business of instruction, the presidents were aided by a succession of many learned and able professors. Of those who are now members of the faculty, it will not be expected of me to speak; and of those who have gone from us and are still living, I will merely refer you to Dr. William Hooper and John DeBerniere Hooper, to Bishop Green, of Mississip-

pi, to Professor Hedrick, and to Drs. Deems, Wheat and Shipp. Among the dead there are several names which the friends of the University ought not to permit to be forgotten. There was Charles W. Harris, to whose brief sojourn here we were indebted for Dr. Caldwell; there was Archibald D. Murphy, who afterwards became one of the most distinguished jurists and statesmen of North Carolina; the Rev. William Bingham, of whom Chief Justice Taylor said, that as a teacher of a school he was well qualified to raise its reputation, "by the extent of his acquirements, the purity of his life, and the judgment by which he accommodated the discipline and instructions of the school to the various talents and dispositions of the youth." There was Dr. Ethan A. Andrews, so well known for his classical labors; and Dr. Olmsted, who, as Professor of Natural Philosophy at Yale College, so greatly increased the reputation which he had established as Professor of Chemistry here; there was Nicholas M. Hentz, a learned man, but not so widely known as his accomplished wife, Mrs. Caroline Lee Hentz; there was Walker Anderson, who afterwards removed to Florida and became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of that State; and finally there was Dr. Elisha Mitchell, whose varied, extensive and profound literary and scientific acquirements were lost to the world a few years ago by a tragical event which sent a pang of sorrow to every votary of science throughout the land.

In referring to the instructors of the institution, the tutors should not be passed over without a notice. Among the living and the dead, they have very able and distinguished representatives. Among the living are ex-Governor Morehead, Hamilton C. Jones, Anderson Mitchell, Giles Mebane, Judge Manly, ex-Secretary Jacob Thompson, and others whose names may yet swell the trump of fame. Among the dead, I would point you to James Martin, afterwards a Judge of the Superior Court; to Gavin Hogg, long one of the ablest lawyers of the State; to Lewis Williams, who was a member of the

House of Representatives so long that he acquired the name of the father of the House; to William D. Mosely, for many years Speaker of the Senate in this State, and afterwards Governor of Florida; to James H. Otey, the able and learned Bishop of Tennessee; to the Rev. Joseph H. Saunders, whose early death cut short a bright career of usefulness in his church; to Edward D. Simms, whose growing reputation as a professor in the University of Alabama was closed by death before he had attained the meridian of his years; and to Abraham F. Morehead, the youngest member of a distinguished family, who would doubtless have greatly increased the fame of that family, had he not died in the earliest dawn of manhood. I name with peculiar sadness George P. Bryan, George B. Johnston, Iowa Royster and E. Graham Morrow, who have so recently been consigned to soldiers' graves.

From this hasty and imperfect sketch of the origin and history of the University, it appears clearly and strongly that the founders of our republic and their successors, have always had a deep sense of the importance of a collegiate education. The enquiry is naturally presented how far their hopes have been realised from this institution; in other words, with what measure of success has it been attended in promoting and advancing the weal of the State? A practical solution of this enquiry may perhaps be obtained by ascertaining, if we can, what influence the men who received their education here have had in the management and direction of the affairs of the General and State governments. It is unnecessary on this occasion, to go into minute details on this subject, but we can say in general, and say with certainty, that there is scarcely an office or place of profit or trust, or any position in the business of life, professional or non-professional, ecclesiastical or lay, military or civil, which has not been filled, time and again, by some one who has received his education, in whole or in part, at this University. To the General government it has furnished one President, at least five members of the cabinet

and four ministers to foreign courts, while of the number which it has sent to the Senate and House of Representatives it is difficult to make a reckoning. In the State government there is hardly any office, which has not been filled by those who have gone forth from these halls. It has its representatives in the highest places of the church, among the leaders at the bar, and in the chambers where suffering humanity most needs the aid of educated science and skill. It has supplied banks and railroads with presidents, clerks and superintendents. It sends its Alumni to explore mines and to construct railroads; and above all, and best of all, it furnishes to agriculture and commerce some of their most enlightened, energetic and skillful votaries.

The exciting times through which we have just passed and are now passing, have prevented me from bringing more particularly to your attention the men whom our University has sent forth to act their parts in the world. It is only by the offices which they have filled, or the places which they have occupied, that I have recalled them to your recollection. Many of them have paid the great debt of nature, and gone to render to their Maker an account of their stewardship. Others are still living to perform, it may be, higher duties to their country, and to obtain greater rewards for themselves. Of all these, dead or living, I have nothing further to say. But with your indulgence, I will occupy a few more moments of your time in recalling from the dim recollections of the past the names of a few men, each of whom was regarded as the college genius of the day, and who, with well directed energies and a longer life, might have left a name which the world would not willingly have let die.

William Cherry was a native of Bertie county, and was graduated here in the year 1800. While in college he was not a very diligent student, but his aptitude for learning was so marvellous that, it was said, he could prepare his lesson after the recitation bell had commenced ringing. Having se-

lected the law as his profession, he had already attained an extensive practice and a high rank at the bar, when his career was cut short by death, caused by intemperance, at the early age of twenty-seven. Those who were engaged in practice with him could not but wonder at the admirable manner in which he managed his causes, knowing as they did that the time which he ought to have spent in the preparation of them, was passed at the card table and around the intoxicating bowl. A story is still remembered, that on one occasion, in the forgetfulness caused by a deep debauch, he opened an important cause by making a very able argument on the wrong side; but being made aware of his mistake just as he was about to close, he, immediately, with admirable presence of mind, commenced a reply for his own client, by saying that the argument which he had just made was what he supposed would be urged by his opponent, and that he would proceed to answer it, and expose its fallacy. Tradition, however, reports that his first argument was so masterly that he could not answer it successfully, and thus lost his cause.

About fifteen years after Mr. Cherry left the University a young man from the county of Nash was, with many others, suspended from college in consequence of what was long known as the great rebellion of 1810, which resulted in the expulsion of the leaders, Messrs. George C. Drumgold and William B. Shepard, and the resignation of the President, Dr. Chapman. The expelled members both afterwards became distinguished men, but talented as they undoubtedly were, they were decidedly inferior in genius to their classmate and friend, Thomas N. Mann. He became a lawyer, and at the time when he fell a victim to consumption, while under thirty years of age, he was one of the best read and most profound lawyers in the State. Though so young, he was appointed by the then President of the United States as *Charge d' Affaires* to Central America, and died while on his way to the court of that country.

In the year 1824, Thomas Dewes, a young man from the county of Lincoln, took his degree of Bachelor of Arts, dividing with Prof. Simms, Judge Manly and ex-Governor Graham the highest honor of the class. His parents were poor, and it is said resorted to the humble occupation of selling cakes for the purpose of procuring means for the education of their promising boy. After his graduation, he studied law and commenced the practice with every prospect of eminent success, when, unhappily, a morbid sensitiveness of temperament, drove him to habits of intemperance, during one of the fits of which he came to an untimely end. His name which ought to have gone down to posterity on account of great deeds achieved by extraordinary talents, will probably be remembered only in connection with a happily turned impromptu epitaph. When ex-Governor Swain was at the bar, he was, on a certain occasion, at the same court with Messrs. James R. Dodge, Hillman and Dews. Mr. Swain had seen somewhere a punning epitaph on a man named Dodge, which ended with the couplet that

"After dodging all he could,
He couldn't dodge the devil."

This he wrote on a piece of paper and handed it to the other members of the bar, whose merriment it very much excited. After a while it reached the hands of Mr. Dodge himself, who, seeing from whom it came and supposing that Hillman and Dews were *participes criminis*, immediately wrote on the back the following :

"Here lie a Hillman and a Swain,
Their lot let no man choose,
They lived in sin and died in pain,
And the devil has his Dews."

Those who are familiar with the playful and happy turn of thought and expression which distinguish the lighter writings of Washington Irving will not be surprised to learn that Mr. Dodge is his nephew.

The next and last college genius to whom I shall call your attention was the late General James Johnston Pettigrew. Born in the county of Tyrrell, he was prepared for college at the celebrated school of William J. Bingham, a son of the Rev. William Bingham already mentioned, and entered the Freshman Class here in the year 1843. His whole college course was a continued series of literary triumphs. In a class containing many members of more than ordinary talents he was among the best, if not the very best, in all his studies; but mathematics was his speciality. In that he was far ahead of all his classmates. I well remember being present at the examination of the class on Astronomy, when the learned Professor, after having worried several members by putting questions which they could not answer, called up Mr. Pettigrew. As he did so one of the class, in a whisper loud enough to be heard half across the room, said, "You can't stick him," and sure enough he couldn't. After taking the Bachelor's degree, and after a short term of service in the Naval Observatory in Washington City, he selected the law as his profession, and went to Europe to perfect himself in that department of it called the civil law. On his return he settled in Charleston and became connected in practice with his distinguished relative, the late Hon. James L. Petigru, who was perhaps the ablest and most profound lawyer in South Carolina. During his brief residence there he became one of the representatives of the city in the Legislature of the State. While a member of that body he greatly distinguished himself by sending in from a committee a minority report against a scheme then proposed for taking steps towards the reopening of the slave trade. He himself constituted the minority, and his report was so profound in its views, and so convincing in its arguments, that the proposed measure failed to secure the sanction of the Legislature, though strongly urged in a report agreed upon by all the other members of the committee.

When the war broke out between the North and the South he espoused the cause of his section of the country. After some service at Charleston he came to this State, was elected Colonel of one of its regiments and was afterwards promoted to the rank of Major General. Of his merits as a soldier and an officer it is unnecessary for me now to speak. His untimely death, in a slight skirmish near the banks of the Potomac during General Lee's retreat from Pennsylvania, caused his friends and his country to deplore an event which extinguished the light of his genius long ere it had attained its meridian splendor.

My young friends, my task is done and no one can feel more sensibly than myself how imperfectly it has been accomplished. No one can know more fully than myself how difficult it has been to withdraw my thoughts from the unhappy condition of our country and apply them to the work of attempting to prepare an offering worthy of your acceptance.

In the commencement of my address I had occasion to refer to the low condition to which the war had suddenly reduced our beloved University. Its declension was as great as it was sudden. Before the war it had attained, in a very few years, a height of prosperity of which scarcely a parallel can be found in any country. In the extent and variety of its studies, the number and ability of its instructors and the number of its students, it surpassed nearly all similar institutions in our own section of the country, and was beginning to rival the old, time-honored establishments of Yale and Harvard. In the year 1858 its catalogue showed a larger number of under-graduates than that of any other college in the United States, except Yale. All this success was accomplished in a very short time. A glance at the rapidly increasing ratio of its graduates will illustrate the truth of my remark. For the first ten years after the date in which degrees were conferred by the University, the number of students who received the Baccalaureate was 53; for the second decade it was 110; for

the third 259 ; for the fourth 146 ; for the fifth 308 ; for the sixth 448 ; and for the seventh the annual number was going on at a rate which would have produced 882, nearly the double of that which immediately preceded it.

Another striking manifestation of the growing fame and the wide-spreading influence of the University was afforded by the honor of having had among the visitors at each of the commencements of 1847 and 1859 the then President of the United States and a part of his cabinet. On the first of these occasions one of her own sons came to greet his fair mother, and on the second a stranger from a distant State came to do her honor. But the scene is now changed. The war has arrested our *Alma Mater* in her proud career of success, and she is now reduced to a low, very low, condition ; but as peace has once more dawned upon the country, let us cherish the fond hope that she will soon emerge, with fresh strength and renovated energies, from the deep valley of humiliation, and again take her seat upon the high hill of prosperity, whence she may spread abroad all over the land the blessings of education and religion, with their attendant benefits of civilization and refinement.

